

Hobby News

I've never liked putting hobby news in the zine. I'm not that well organized and I always feel like I'm forgetting something. But this time two items are about me, so I can't really leave them out.

As I mentioned a couple issues ago, I am giving up my hobby service positions due to increasing pressure at school. Ken Peel, the new editor of the ZINE REGISTER, will take over the PONTEVEDRIA game openings list. Since every zine should trade for ZR, Ken will have access to all Dip openings in the hobby, and he'll keep a current list that he'll send out for SASE. GMs should point out their openings to Ken to make sure they get listed. Ken Peel, 8708 First Ave #T2, Silver Spring MD 20910.

I am also ending my 3 years of association with the U.S. Orphan Service. I made a professional search for a replacement, asking several people in the hobby to make nominations for the job. I narrowed those nominations to a list of six people. I'm keeping everyone's name confidential, but I would like to thank everyone who took the time to help me find a replacement. The Orphan Service is a tough job to fill, and you helped me find an excellent person to do it.

I'm pleased to announce that Pete Gaughan will be taking my place. Pete is publisher of PERELANDRA, and is well known and respected in the hobby. He will be partners with current custodian Rod Walker in helping place orphan games. I'm also happy to say that the finances I'm turning over to Pete are in excellant shape, including \$72 from the PDD Auction and \$50 from a generous donor who I'm not sure wants to be named.

My final act as U.S. Orphan Service custodian will be to give the hobby some advice. We can't do the job without dedicated players. Players who care enough to keep records of their games, who care enough to check with GMs who are a little late to offer their help, who care enough to contact the orphan service when a game is a month late rather than waiting 6 months. The orphan service is not out to punish bad GMs, but to offer a service to them. Anyone can get overextended in the hobby. Circumstances can happen to anyone. Both players and GMs should not be afraid to ask for help. Rod Walker, 1273 Crest Dr, Encinitas CA 92024; Pete Gaughan 3121 E Park Row #165, Arlington TX 76010.

WHY I PREFER MADONNA TO JOHN WAYNE (an introduction to music reviews)

I get along with Frauke's brother Roland. Good thing too, otherwise the six weeks he was here would have been very long indeed. But it was great. We didn't have all the free time to spend with him that we wanted, but we all had a good time.

But we do have one area of violent disagreement. Westerns. I despise them. I think they are the lowest form of blasphemy of the American culture. Roland loves them. Some of them are high art, he says, but all of them are a mirror of the culture that produced them. Good Lord, I think, do believe really believe that we are like that? Apparently they do, look at all the foreign commentators that compare Reagan's presidency to the movies he played in years ago. Never mind that the comparison fits.

The point is that we choose what we like. One man's art is another man's garbage. I was a bit surprised that Roland and I disagreed some on music, since he has some talent as a musician and has a record collection that any of us would envy. But no, he is bored with most music. Rock has become stale to him, he hears very little that's new and exciting. But of course, I say, rock has never been new. It has always had deep roots, and what is old today will be revived tomorrow. There's only so much one can do with guitars in 4:4 time. Rock is exciting not because it's original, but because of the new twists given to the old themes.

Anyway, we choose our own art. I can count the movies I've seen the past two years on one hand. I don't look for much meaning in them, and I don't find it. But I am a student of pop music. Take the last single by Madonna, "Who's That Girl," can you hear the talent and energy she put into the song? No? Most people don't see pop singles as art, but I do, and listening to the radio is a lot cheaper than buying movie tickets.

So Roland chooses to enjoy all Westerns, good and bad, but only good music. I choose to enjoy all music, good and bad, but only good movies. We both enjoy all mystery novels, good and bad, so we do have something in common. (Well, we better limit that to all American style mysteries.) Science fiction doesn't excite me at all, though.

The people writing about music in the hobby these days don't seem to have much fun. C'mon, rock wasn't meant to be psychoanalyzed in your living room. Mac Smith seems to understand that, but his music comments in BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY come too seldom these days. If you catch me being too serious, knock me over the head with a 2x4, OK?

UNITED HOCKEY

Quite a few people wrote me saying they'd love to try United Hockey if only they knew how it was played. For them I'm enclosing proposed rules, though I don't have the final session's results done in time for the zine.

I don't think the rules are well written yet, and they will revised before the season starts. There are also a couple of suggestions I am considering; designting "power play" and "penalty killers" in the lineups to make the power plays more interesting, provision for injuries, and some sort of draft for high quality rookies. The first season's coaches seem real excited about the game, and I welcome you to give it a try.

PENNANT FEVER

Surprise, surprise. The Minnesota Twins were the first team in baseball to clinch their division, and we in Minnesota aren't really sure what to do. It has after all been 17 years since the last time. It was just five years ago that they lost 100 games, and just last year they were 71-91.

On paper, the Twins should be no more than a .500 team. They have been outscored, outhit, outslugged, outhomered and outpitched by their opponents this season. They do have the fewest errors in the AL, but can that explain why they are 10 games over .500?

The thing they had going for them was consistency. They led the division since late June. Despite losing records in both July and August, they never had a long losing streak to knock them off the top. There are two men responsible; Frank Viola, who has pitched strong and usually won every 5th day, and Jeff Keardon, who gave the team the confidence that they could hold even the slimmest lead in the late innings.

The Twins aren't in the same class as Detroit or Toronto, but have a few things in their favor. By clinching early, they have the pitching rotation set for the playoffs. They do have the home advantage in 4 games, and we know all about their amazing home record. Twins fans wiped out the attendance record this year, and discovered how loud the Dome can be. Hopefully the Tigers and the Blue Jays will knock themselves out, need a extra game to decide the winner, who will be exhausted before the first game begins in Minnesota.

Unfortunately, we won't be there. We've been to about 15 games this season, seeing all wins but once. But we would have needed a second mortgage to afford playoff tickets. \$15/\$20 minimum per game, must buy for all 8 possible games, cash in advance. We'll be watching at home like everybody else, while the rich folks will be at the game. Hope the Twins know where the real fans will be.

I should have known better than to set a deadline right before school starts. Blame the Twins, school, Roland, and everyone else for not being ready ahead of time. Plus I have to present my paper at a conference in Duluth this week. I've been studying maritime policy for 9 months, and I get to speak to 50 experts. Fun fun, but it's a free trip.

If you haven't seen the Runestone Poll results, POMMES was 37th and BIG HITS was 44th. Mediocre, but appropriate. Strange though, because BIG HITS got higher votes than POMMES and beat POMMES in the preference matrix. I was 32nd as a GM with a 7.95 score, which I'm happy with, though I have to wonder why there were more votes than players in the poll. I won't lose any sleep over it.

RULES FOR UNITED HOCKEY AND THE MIST COUNTY HOCKEY ASSOCIATION (PROPOSED FOR SEASON 2)

(SUMMARY OF CHANGES: For easier computation, the concept of shifts is eliminated. This changes the effect of penalties somewhat. Out of position rule heavily revised. Shot formulas are exactly half of previous. Goal formula changed to for random number from 0 to 1, gives more goals with low skill goalies. Pulling goaltender mandatory in 1 goal games. Scouting eliminated. Rookies play four games at SL 0. Rookie goalies play eight games at SL 0. Cash payments simplified. New NMR procedure.)

UNITED HOCKEY is a play-by-mail hockey league simulation invented by Scott Hanson. It is adapted from the UNITED soccer game invented by Alan Parr. These rules have borrowed heavily from the UNITED rules of Bill Becker and Steve Knight. The suggestions of Dan Stafford and Noel Blythe proved invaluable. Comment and criticism on these rules are welcome.

PLAYING HOCKEY

PLAYERS There are three types of players: goaltender (GL), defenseman (DF), and forward (FW). Each player is given a name and is registered with the league at one position. Each player has a skill level (SL) ranging from 0 (worst) to 10 (best) which represents how well the player plays his position. Players may gain skill level through coaching. Each player also has an age ranging from age 0 (rookie) to age I up to age V. Players lose skill level as they advance in age.

STARTING OUT A coach entering the game either buys a squad of new players or inherits an existing team. A coach buying a team begins with \$7,000,000. Forwards and defenders cost \$100,000 per skill level, goaltenders cost \$300,000 per skill level. All such players start at age I.

LINEUPS For each game the coach submits of lineup consisting of one GL, two defensive lines (D1 and D2) with an equal number of one to four defensemen each, and three forward lines (F1, F2 and F3) with an equal number of one to four forwards each. The sum of players on one defensive line and one forward line must be 5. Note that the total number of players in a game is not set; it can range from 12 to 15.

The rating of a line is the sum of the skill levels of all players on that line plus any additions for rough play and home ice advantage. The rating of D1 must be at least as great as D2; the rating of F1 must be at least as great as F2 which must be at least as great as F3. The rating of any forward line cannot exceed three times the rating of any defensive line. Likewise, the rating of any defensive line cannot exceed three times the rating of any forward line. Beyond these restrictions, the lineup is the choice of the team coach and may be changed from game to game.

PLAYING THE GAME Each game is divided into 6 shifts of 10 minutes each. Each defensive line plays three shifts, one with each forward line. Likewise, each forward line plays two shifts, one with each defensive line. The goaltender plays the entire game.

Shots on goal for each team are determined by comparing the ratings of each line.

a. The three forward lines are compared to the 2 opposing defensive lines. If the rating the F line is greater than an opposing D line, the F line receives a number of shots equal to one-half the difference.

b. The two defensive forward lines are compared to the three opposing forward lines. If the rating of the D line is greater than an opposing F line, the D line receives a number of shots equal to one-fourth the difference.

c. Each of the three forward lines is compared to the corresponding opposing forward line. If the rating of a team's F line exceeds that of the opposing F line, the first team receives a number of shots equal to one-fourth the difference.

To determine how many goals are scored during a shift, each shot is played against the opposing goaltender. For each shot on net, a random number from 0 to 1 is generated; if the number is less than $(160-19*gl+.5*gl)/210$, a goal is scored. Otherwise the shot is blocked. The chances of a goal scoring at each level of goalie are: 0-76.2%, 1-67.4%,

2-59.0%, 3-51.2%, 4-43.8%, 5-36.9%, 6-30.5%, 7-24.5%, 8-19.0%, 9-14.5%, 10-9.5%. (NOTE the formula for season one was $(140-17*gl+.5*gl)/210$, which was derived from the dice formulas in the season one rules.)

PLAYING OUT OF POSITION In general, a player may play out of his registered position at half his normal skill level, rounded down. This loss is for the one game only, he may return to his normal position at his normal skill level. However, a GL can play out of position only at SL 0; likewise a DF or FW may play goaltender only at SL 0.

LINE SHUFFLING One player per game may have his skill levels distributed among several lines. The coach should write that player in the lineup at his normal position. The players name and level should be noted in the space marked LINE SHUFFLE. Any or all of that player's skill levels may be distributed in any manner among the other lines, even those of the same position of the player. The 3:1 balance should be maintained both before and after the shuffle. (This replaces last season's OUT OF POSITION rule.)

HOME ICE ADVANTAGE The home team in each match is given 4 extra levels to distribute among his FW and DF shifts. The 3:1 balance must be maintained both before and after addition of these extra levels.

ROUGH PLAY For each game, a coach must choose how rough the team will play to add strength, but at the risk of incurring penalties. Each coach must add at least one level of roughness, to a maximum of one level for each player in the game. These extra levels may be given to the GK, any D line, or any F line, but it takes 3 roughness points to raise the GK one level. However, a line may not be given more than one roughness level for each player on the line. The GK can be raised at most 1 roughness level (by 3 roughness points), and a 3-man F line can receive at most 3 roughness points. The 3:1 balance must be maintained both before and after the addition of roughness.

PENALTIES Each roughness point given to a line or the GL results in a 1/3 chance of a penalty being called each shift that line or GL plays. Technically, a penalty removes one player from the ice for two minutes, or until the opposing team scores. For simplicity, penalties deduct a multiple of 1/30 of a line's shots, since a two minute penalty lasts 1/30 the game. A penalty to a F line will reduce the shots of that line by 3/30 and both D lines by 1/30. A penalty to a D line will reduce the shots of that line by 2/30 and each F line by 1/30. A penalty to GL reduces here will reduce the shots of all F and D lines by 1/30.

In addition, when a penalty is called the opposing team receives power play shots using the same system as shots are deducted; i.e. a penalty to a F line will increase the shots of the opposing line by 3/30 and both D lines by 1/30. Power play shots are added separately, and the number of power play goals cannot exceed the number of penalties.

A penalty has a 2% chance of resulting in a penalty shot in addition to a penalty. The opposing team then has its best forward on the ice take the shot, and has a $(70 + 3*FW - 3*GL)$ percent chance of scoring.

Penalties have no effect beyond a particular game. While each penalty will be assigned to a player for reporting game results, a player accumulating penalties through a season will not affect that player.

PULLING THE GOALTENDER If after adjudicating a game and a team is behind by one goal, the goaltender will be pulled in a last attempt to tie the game. That team will receive extra shots equal to 1/15 its total shots. The opposing team will receive 1/60 its total shots, but these shots are shot at an empty net. The final shots from both teams will be randomly ordered. If the team can tie the game, subsequent shots are ignored and the game goes to overtime. (See note below.)

OVERTIME If a game ending is tied after adjudication, it will go to overtime. Each team receives 1/12 its total shots. The shots will be randomly ordered, and the first team to score will win. If no team scores, the game remains as a tie.

(NOTE that the total shots used to calculate shots for pulled goalies and overtime is after penalties are deducted and do not include power play shots.)

VALUE POINTS Each session, each team will be given 2 value points (VP), plus an additional point for each win and .5 points for each tie. VPs are used to coach players or to scout games, and may be accumulated from session to session.

They may not be sold or traded between teams.

COACHING Each session, a coach has the option to "coach" their players using accumulated VPs. One VP can be used to raise a DF or FW one skill level. Three VPs are required to raise a GL on skill level. No player may be "coached" more than one level per session, or three levels over the season, with the exception of rookies.

ROOKIES A team may add three rookies to their team each season at no cost. A rookie plays at age 0 and is assigned a position. After playing four matches at SL 0 (eight matches for a GL), he rises immediately to SL 2, and may be "coached" one SL per session not subject to the 3 level per season limit.

SCOUTING Scouting is no longer available.

AGING All players range in age from age 0 (rookies) to age I up to age V and beyond. At the end of each season, a player advances to the next age and except for rookies lose some skill level. There is some randomization to the aging process; a player of age I has 60% chance of losing 2 SL, 20% of losing 1 SL and 20% of losing 3 SL. Likewise, age II players have 60% chance of losing 3 SL, but may lose 2 or 4; age III players have 60% chance of losing 4 SL, but may lose 3 or 5; and age IV and older players have 60% chance of losing 5 SL, but may lose 4 or 6. Any player falling to SL 0 or below after aging is automatically retired.

MIST COUNTY HOCKEY ASSOCIATION RULES

ORGANIZATION The MCHA may consist of any number of divisions of no more than 10 teams each. In the first season, all divisions will be equal. After the first season, stronger teams will be moved to stronger division and weaker teams to weaker divisions. Exactly how the reorganization will work will be determined once all teams are entered for the first season.

STANDINGS Teams earn two MCHA points for each win, one for each tie. Standings in a division will be determined first by MCHA points, then goal differential, then total number of goals, then head to head MCHA matchups, then most goals scored away from home in head to head matches. If after all this the teams are still tied, they will share the position.

FINANCES After each session, each team receives \$100,000, plus \$50,000 for each win and \$25,000 for each tie. This cash is to transfer players from other teams or buy players at auction. Once established, a team may go up to \$500,000 into debt, subject to 10% interest per session. If a team's debt at the end of a session exceeds \$500,000, the MCHA will sell a player at waiver (the smallest skill level player possible) to bring the debt back under \$500,000. The MCHA may fine teams \$10,000 for lineup violations.

EXPANSION TEAMS AND ADDING PLAYERS A new team will start with \$7,000,000 according to the rules for getting started, but may not go into debt with initial purchases. A team roster must include the minimum number of players of SL 0 to 10 required to play plus a goaltender, including rookies. Rookies are signed by merely informing the MCHA office, up to three per season. Rookies who do not play the minimum three games per season must be released. Players may be transferred between teams at the discretion of the coaches. Coaches must truthfully inform each other of the age, skill level, and position of all players involved, and no deal is complete until both coaches have submitted substantially identical instructions to the MCHA office. A time for the transfer must also be indicated so a player is not listed for two teams for a given game. No player may be sold for less than 80% of waiver value. No transfers may take place in the final three sessions of the season.

AUCTION Each session the MCHA may offer players at auction, with discretion as to the number, skill level, age, position, and special characteristics. Coaches may also add players to the auction, and specify a minimum bid. If no minimum is specified, the player is sold on waivers. Each player to be auctioned will receive a number, and will be auctioned off in sequence. Coaches may bid for these players as they like, in whole thousand dollar amounts, and players go to the highest bidder. Coaches may bid conditional on results of previous bids, and any bids that put a team over the debt limit are ignored. To settle any tied auction, the MCHA will keep a randomly ranked list of teams. The auction

will be won by the highest bidder that is highest on this list. Once a team wins an auction in this fashion, it is moved to the bottom this list.

WAIVERS A team may sell a player on waivers. The player is then placed in the auction with a minimum bid of the waiver value. The waiver value is 80% of face value (\$100,000 for each SL, triple for GL) for rookies, 60% for age I, 40% for age II, 20% for age III, and 10% for age IV and beyond. If no team bids at least this amount, the MCHA pays the waiver value and the player is retired. Since there are no auctions the final three sessions, waivers made in these sessions are made without auction at the player's value for the next season, after aging.

SCHEDULE The MCHA will publish a schedule at the beginning of the season, with approximately 10 sessions of 3 games each. The schedule may be changed if teams are added to the MCHA in the first 3 sessions, but all teams will play the same number of matches, with as nearly as possible equal number of games home and away.

PLAYOFFS Upon completion of the first season, the team on top of the standings is declared league champion. Immediately a Cup playoff tournament is played, seeded with 2-out-of-3 game format (1 game at each home ice, 3rd game with no home advantage). The winner of the tournament will hold the Mariucci Cup.

TEAM AND PLAYER NAMES There is no convention to naming teams or players, coaches may do so as they like. Names may not be changed while the season is in progress.

POSTAL RULES

LINEUP FORMS At the beginning of the season the GM will send each player a set of lineup forms. While the specific form need not be used, please follow its format as a convenience to the GM. Changes to lineups should be on a new form unless the change is minor. No telephoned orders are accepted.

EARLY BIRD BONUS To encourage early mailing of lineups, the GM will offer a bonus 1 VP for lineups received a week or more before the deadline.

GAME RESULTS Each session the results of games will be sent to coaches, including league standings, cash balances, transactions, and game results. Each goal and penalty is assigned to a player on the appropriate line. The chance of a player being assigned a goal or penalty is equal to that player's share of the total skill level of the line. All power play goals are assigned to forwards, and all empty net, pulled goalie, and overtime goals are assigned to F1 players. The results also list the number of regular, power play and overtime shots for each team.

NO LINEUP RECEIVED Deadlines are strict. If no lineup is submitted for a team, the GM will use the lineup submitted for the last game. Minimum roughness will be played, assigned to F2 if balance can be kept. Two successive NLRs, or four in a season, may be grounds for dismissing the coach.

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